

Coming Together

by Loo Dig-E

Category: Halo, Mass Effect
Genre: Adventure, Tragedy
Language: English
Characters: OC
Status: In-Progress
Published: 2014-03-19 22:09:01
Updated: 2014-03-19 22:09:01
Packaged: 2016-04-27 04:52:52
Rating: M
Chapters: 4
Words: 13,192
Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: As the UNSC is nearing defeat at the hands of the Covenant, the Allies intervene to prevent the Council from potentially gaining a new ally, and avert the need for another total galactic war.

1. Revelations

A/N: Some people have been wondering when the UNSC is going to show up in my story _100,000 Years Later_. Long story short, they're not. The UNSC won't show up until this planned sequel that takes place 366 years after the events of _Mass Effect_. I have not decided on an official title for this story, nor have I started planning the exact order of events that will take place. I only have a general idea.

Before you read this, you should read the one-shot _Peace Never Lasts_ that I wrote. It provides backstory on the formation of the Allies, and how the First Allied-Council War got started, and is a partial bridge between this story and _100,000 Years Later_. I am still not sure what I will do with the Yahg. They stay neutral during the First Allied-Council War, but not the Second, since by that time their civilization has become too big and powerful to not be drawn into such a conflict. They will not be joining the Allies, since they are largely under the influence of the Salarrians (as revealed in _Mass Effect 3_), but they hate the Council, and are strongly against joining it. I'll probably have the Yahg divided in civil war. One yahg faction will be loyal to the Salarrians and fighting to join the Council. The other yahg faction will be fighting to keep their species independent, receiving minimal support from the Allies (not because the independent yahg faction plans on joining the Allies anytime soon, or because the Allies actually give a shit what happens to the Yahg species, but rather because the Allies would just prefer to not have another enemy to deal with).

You really should not read this story without reading the

aforementioned first two stories, as this is an intended sequel, and they provide quite some backstory, especially the one-shot Peace Never Lasts. Like I said, I did not intend on revealing this so soon, but people were asking 'where's the UNSC?' in the 100,000 Years Later when the UNSC Humans don't even leave their home system until 2310. That's 235 years after the Alliance Humans, and 127 years after the events of Mass Effect. It would be impossible for the UNSC to show up in my story 100,000 Years Later, and I don't know why people would be thinking they would.

Anyway, I'll get back to this story after its preceding story, 100,000 Years Later.

Revelations

****LOCATION: SLIPSTREAM SPACE****

****DATE: circa 163282 AR (After Reunification)****

****2552 CE (Common Era)****

****657 AS (After Sapience)****

****369 NB (New Beginning)****

****366 AA (After Awakening)****

366 years after the Reaper War..._

Six individuals sat around in a circle, their chairs all fitted to their respective shapes and sizes. Two humans, one batarian, one collector, one geth, and one rachni. The espionage proof room was dark and small, perfectly fitting to the classified nature of their meeting.

"How long have you known about these UNSC Humans?" the Rachni representative with vocal implants questioned the Collector representative and Imperium admiral, with the collector answering first, its voice as menacing as its appearance.

"Not long. We discovered them last month. Their Sol System is gravitationally locked with the Alliance's Sol System by a magnetic tether of sorts, keeping both systems on exact opposite sides of the galaxy. When Pluto and Neptune were destroyed by the Council, starting the Second Allied-Council War, and the Charon Relay was removed from the system because of the security risk it posed, there were disruptions in the tether. However, because Neptune was a gas planet, and Pluto and the Charon Relay were so small, the disruptions went unnoticed, but when Earth was destroyed by the Council near the end of the war, the disruption in the tether was substantial, and was instantly picked up by our galactic monitors. We investigated, and eventually discovered the UNSC Humans. We felt no need to notify the Alliance Humans, but our increased travel into uncharted territory did not go unnoticed by the Geth. They asked us what we were doing, and we did not lie to them. Then, they revealed the existence of the UNSC Humans to the rest of the Allies."

The Allies was a military alliance between the Batarian State, Geth Collective, Human Alliance, and Rachni People, molded in the aftermath of the Reaper War, and solidified in the fires of the

Allied-Council War. The Collectors and Human Imperium were not members of the Allies, but remained on good terms with them.

The Collectors lived in the dark space between stars and outside the galaxy. They were almost never seen, but they maintained constant communication with the Geth, which was possible because of their shared synthetic nature, allowing them to communicate at the speed of light. The Geth, in turn, gave the rest of the Allies updates on the Collectors. Whether or not the Collectors were honest was unknown, but they had not committed any acts of aggression against the Allies or the Imperium after they were freed from the Reapers. They had actually assisted the Allies in both the First and Second Allied-Council War, although they did so indirectly with their own ulterior motives " whatever those motives may have been " not actually with the intention of assuring Allied victory.

"I see. And your people?" the rachni directed toward the Imperium admiral.

"We've known about them for 111,661 years, but we've never had any reason to contact them. In fact, we've had reason not to contact them. I don't need to remind you how first contact with a new warrior-civilization goes, and I most certainly don't need to remind you of the past three centuries of war " war that contact with this new civilization WILL, bring back."

The Imperium Humans were not the first humans to be seeded in the Milky Way. They were just the first humans here to pass the trials of the Precursors. Unbeknownst to the Imperium Humans, they were not the first humans to pass the trials altogether. Many other human civilizations had passed the trials before in many other galaxies around the universe, but that was another story. The Imperium Humans maintained an embassy on Arcturus Station in the Milky Way, and the Alliance Humans maintained an embassy on Olympus Station in the Mini Way.

"You have a point. First contact means war, and the Rachni People will destroy all those who threaten us, but we wish to avoid doing so at all costs..."

The Rachni fulfilled the necessary requirements to be considered a warrior-race, and thus, were eligible to join the Allies, but they were undoubtedly the most merciful of the four member races. The Rachni representative continued.

"...The data you have given us says this Covenant has been mercilessly slaughtering these UNSC Humans for 27 years, with the intention of exterminating them completely. Why did you not bring this to our attention earlier?"

"Because you would have intervened, and all human civilizations must go through a great trial in which they show their willingness to make great sacrifice. This war was the UNSC Humans' great trial, and they were recently deemed to have successfully completed it. However, they cannot defeat the Covenant because of what the Forerunners did to them. They require our assistance."

The Alliance admiral, was curious about this new human civilization, and probed the Imperium admiral for more information.

"You know, 111,661 years is a pretty long time. You must know a great deal about these UNSC Humans. Tell me more."

"Very well. I'll start from the beginning. When the Forerunners defeated us in the Second Human-Forerunner War, they took the all the humans who surrendered; ground them up into a digital state; reprogrammed them with geas; and fractured them into many different sub-species. They spread these sub-species across many worlds and installations, with the original variation of humans, like you and I, on Earth. The geas allowed the Forerunners to exert direct control over their subjects, literally, and also were a type of genetic instructions, sending their development down a desired path. The Librarian managed to hide seeds that lead to the UNSC's Spartan Commandos, as well as their smart AIs. But, for the most part, UNSC subservience was ensured. Together, the geas and different sub-species ensured Humanity would never unite and develop military technology capable of threatening the Ecumene's dominance ever again. After the Forerunner-Flood War, only the original variation of humans the Forerunners left alive on Earth remained. For some reason, the Flood left the Sol System untouched. We later discovered this was because the Flood were the Precursors, our creators. They wanted to destroy the Forerunners, but we got in the way several times. If we had known the Flood's true intentions, we would've left them alone. Hell, we probably would've helped them. Anyway, after the Forerunners fired the Halo Array, they reseeded the galaxy with life, including the original variation of humans. Of course, they didn't remove the geas placed in their reprogrammed humans. We managed to disable the direct control functions of the geas and isolate it to anyone born from by two of their people. There's no worry of their geas spreading to anyone born with a parent from another civilization. However, we could not remove the geas completely. That's why the UNSC's development of military technology pretty much stopped at the end of the 20th Century. It only picked back up again because they started reverse-engineering Covenant technology."

The Geth representative was content to stay quiet for the majority of the meeting, but decided to chime in now.

"That brings us to our current dilemma. The Covenant are going to defeat the UNSC within the next two to four months, and proceed to exterminate them completely. I believe we are morally obligated to stop this from happening."

All in the room agreed the Covenant had to be stopped, but the Human Alliance and Batarian State admirals agreed for much different reasons than all the others.

"Yes. The Covenant may present the Council with an opportunity to regain their former strength; strength we fought so hard over these past few centuries to ensure they lost. We cannot allow that to happen. We will not allow that to happen."

After the Council blew up Earth and half of Khar'shan near the end of the Second Allied-Council War, the Alliance Humans and Batarians all but abandoned any morals they had in the past, and launched a crusade, taking their gloves off and holding nothing back, ravaging Council Space and driving the major Council races to the brink of extinction. The Imperium Humans hoped for their younger Alliance counterparts to one day join them in holding the Mantle, and that day would come, but not anytime soon. They Alliance Humans were still

young, having only been an interstellar civilization for 447 years, only 205 years longer than their UNSC counterparts. The Alliance Humans were still going through their violent phase, a phase the Imperium Humans went through as well.

"We have already devised a plan of attack..."

The Imperium admiral began manipulating a holographic map of the galaxy projected in the center of the room, pointing out fleet formations and their intended deployments.

"...Two Covenant fleets, calling themselves the Fleet of Righteous Vigilance and the Fleet of Holy Respite, are already en route to Reach, and will be there in less than two days. An Imperium rapid-reaction force will intercept them with slipspace disruptors, forcing them to either drop out of FTL, or be torn apart by anomalies. If they drop out, we will engage and destroy them. While we're doing that, the Collectors and Geth will simultaneously attack these targets in Covenant Space, halting any further deployments to Reach. They'll leave the Covenant capital High Charity and any other homeworlds alone for now. We want the Covenant to stand down, and attacking the heart of someone's civilization usually just really pisses them off. An Alliance rapid-reaction force is already nearby Reach, and can be there today as soon as we give the order. They will subdue the Covenant's advance force already on Reach. The Batarians and Rachni will send naval forces only, as it probably wouldn't be a good idea to land any non-human forces on Reach for the time being. The Batarians and Rachni can be there tomorrow and assist the Alliance with locking down the Epsilon Eridani System. Another day after that, we can all send our main forces in, completely securing the system from any further Covenant incursion, and establishing formal contact with the UNSC Humans."

"I suppose you also have recommendations for rules of engagement?" the Alliance admiral questioned.

"Yes. I advise you tell your forces not to attack the UNSC on sight, but the right to self-defense obviously cannot be abridged. As for the Covenant, you should engage them on sight, but if they stand down, then let them stand down. If possible, you should take prisoners, but you shouldn't take any unnecessary risks capturing regulars. However, we have identified several high-ranking personnel that should definitely be captured. I've forwarded you all the data with their names, descriptions, and current or last known locations across the galaxy, as well as other important information."

"How long do you think we can keep the Council in the dark about this?" the State admiral questioned both the collector and geth representatives. They were the two species with the most extensive misinformation programs running to try and keep the Council's spies and other intelligence gatherers at bay.

"Maybe a month or two. More if we raid one of their STG bases," the collector responded in that same menacing voice.

The rachni representative was rather critical of that plan.

"Might that start another war?"

"You heard the ancient human. War is coming, and soon, whether we

like it or not. Better to strike first. There will be less motivation for the Council to counter-attack if we carry out the raid, since we are not officially part of your Allies, but they will know."

The rachni representative was disappointed.

"Very well. How much more free time would this raid buy us?"

"Another month or two. After the raid, they will double their efforts to investigate our motives, and we can lead them away from the Covenant and UNSC."

In the past three centuries, no species in the room had suffered pain and loss more than the Alliance Humans and Batarians, and their two admirals were both very eager to get back to their duties. They were worried, and rightfully so. In the time they spent in this room, in this meeting, the Turians and Krogan may very well have launched another surprise attack right at their hearts, just like they did to the Harsa and Sol System.

"Sounds good. Let's get it done."

Everyone in the room shared a few nods and left their seats. A portal appeared in front of the door in the room that lead to other parts of the undisclosed warship. All of the admirals and representatives left through the portal, with the exception of the Imperium admiral, who left through the door after all others had departed and the door opened.

"Here we go again."

2. First Responders

A/N: This chapter may seem a little rushed because I had not originally planned to include it. However, upon proofreading, I felt the jump from the first chapter to the now third chapter was too much, and decided I needed to bridge the gap.

As stated in the next chapter, I was intentionally ambiguous with the description of the marine.

First Responders

****LOCATION: MILKY WAY / SIGURD'S CRADLE / SKEPSIS SYSTEM****

****DATE: circa 2552 CE****

366 years after the Reaper War...

Alliance warships had undergone a great deal of changes in the past 366 years. Long story short, everything got bigger and better. Frigates became corvettes, cruisers became frigates, dreadnaughts became cruisers, and carriers became assault ships. Superdreadnoughts and supercarriers, which only the Geth possessed three centuries ago, became the new regular dreadnoughts and carriers, with new classes of superdreadnoughts and supercarriers being built, bigger and better. There was also no such thing as a fighter carrier anymore. All carriers were armed with at least a Thanix Cannon now.

After Earth was destroyed, the Alliance also stopped naming their warships after landmarks from the lost world. Lost, but not forgotten. Now, they gave warships more original names. Usually the names were something inspirational, but sometimes they were menacing.

The SSV Darkest Before Dawn, an Alliance assault ship, was just about to get back to patrolling the Terminus after refitting on Franklin with the rest of its wolf pack, consisting of a cruiser, two frigates, and three corvettes. An assault ship was designed to deploy and support ground forces. A few centuries ago, assault ships only carried battalions, but newer and bigger ships meant newer and bigger detachments. Now, assault ships carried regiments. The SSV Darkest Before Dawn was carrying the 1st Regiment of the 943rd Marine Division. It was one of five similar wolf packs that made up the Sigurd's Cradle rapid-reaction naval task force. One of the wolf packs had an assault ship jam-packed with countless drones, unlike the other four, which were carrying troops.

Normally, the five packs were split-up, all patrolling a different star system in the Sigurd's Cradle, staying close, but not too close, ready to regroup and respond to a crisis in their assigned area at a moment's notice, but the entire task force was grouped together at the moment, preparing to depart from the naval base on the northern hemisphere of Franklin after refit.

An Alliance marine from Prime 2-1 lay down on her bed in the barracks of the Darkest Before Dawn, her eyes closed, just listening to some music. The music stopped when she received a urgent data packet through her omni-tool. She opened the packet and read through its contents as alarms blared and emergency lights shone. The ship's AI, which had become mandatory aboard all Systems Alliance vessels after the Reaper War, blared a message over the ships intercom.

"All hands to battle stations. Marines, prepare for combat drop."

The data packet was filled with tons of information, none of it even close to what the marine expected. She was sure they were about to respond to a Council threat, not an uncommon occurrence, even during this time of supposed peace. She had never heard of this Covenant Empire, or any of the races under its authority, but apparently she was about to be fighting them, and possibly assisting their enemies, the UNSC, two previously and completely unknown factions. She was not about to charge into a conflict blind however. She was given a plethora of information from the Geth regarding the Covenant's capabilities, as well as the UNSC's. The Covenant were to be engaged on sight, but the UNSC should only be engaged in self-defense. There was a great deal more of information, but that was what really stood out.

Systems Alliance marines had a desired loadout ready in their rooms aboard most vessels, as well as in other areas throughout the ship, and the marine jumped out of her bed, stripped down, almost destroyed her locker while opening it, donned her battlesuit, and magnetically slung on her weapons.

She kept it simple. For her primary weapon, she wielded the M-34 Avenger assault rifle, the newest model in the Avenger series, and

the standard-issue assault rifle of both the Systems Alliance and Batarian State. For her secondary weapon, she wielded the M-29 Predator heavy pistol, the newest model in the Predator series, and the standard-issue sidearm of the Systems Alliance Marine Corps. Both weapons were incredibly light, and incredibly hard, as was the case with all Alliance small arms weapons. You could lift them with one finger, and bust open a skull with one swing.

Ready to jump right at anything crazy enough to come her way, the marine charged off to meet up with the rest of her squad in the well deck and prepare for a combat drop. When she arrived, all of her squadmates hooked up to an orbital drop net. When their time came to deploy, they would jump out of the well deck and free fall to the surface of the planet. The net would keep them together and could be guided by their squad AI. The mass effect field of the net would increase their mass during free fall, increasing their speed. Then, the mass effect field of the net would decrease their mass to near-zero and the thruster in the center of the net would fire up and soften their landing. Once ready to deploy, all they could do was wait.

After receiving their new orders, the rapid-reaction force formed up and jumped into slipstream space using the new slipspace drives developed for the Alliance by the human scientist Eli Wegner, the mastermind behind the M-490 Blackstorm. They arrived in the Epsilon Eridani System in less than an hour. How fast you traveled through slipspace was largely dependent on literally how fast your ship could travel. Advanced slipspace drives allowed for more accurate jumps, and the Imperium's extremely advanced slipspace drives could radically warp space and time, allowing them to travel across the galaxy instantaneously, but still, how fast you got from A to B in slipstream space was, as in real space, still largely dependent upon your acceleration. The relationship between your ship's mass and thrust determined how fast you were going to go. Less mass and more thrust meant faster speeds. More mass and less thrust meant slower speeds. Mass effect fields lowered a ship's mass to near-zero, allowing for monumental acceleration through both real and slipstream space alike.

The rapid-reaction force exited slipspace on the outskirts of the Epsilon Eridani System and immediately scanned the area. After they knew where everything was in the system, they made a precision jump to Reach and engaged the existing Covenant naval forces in orbit. They had received intel gathered by the Geth, Collectors, and Imperium Humans on both the Covenant's and UNSC's capabilities, and knew just what to do.

The naval battle was over in less than a minute. The Covenant ships had a severely limited range in comparison to the Alliance ships, and were all destroyed before they could even mark a target. Their shields were disabled by one or two proton rounds from a Mass Accelerator Cannon. After their shields were lost, a single burst from the Thanix Cannons on the Alliance cruisers gutted every last ship. A Thanix Cannon consisted of a number of barrels placed closely together, combining their fire into a single bolt. The bigger the ship, the bigger and the more barrels that could be added. Thanix Cannons were found on everything from fighters to battle stations. An Alliance cruiser wielded a Thanix Cannon consisting of eight capital ship-grade barrels in a circle formation, impacting a target with 528 kilotons of kinetic force.

Some of the Covenant vessels didn't even have shields, and were simply obliterated moments after engagement. The rapid-reaction force didn't even need to employ any advanced tactics or special weapons. All they had to do was just point and shoot. After achieving orbital dominance, the 943rd Marine Division was deployed to finish the job.

3. Our Newest Heroes

A/N: By 2552, heat sinks and thermal clips are severely outdated in the Alliance. The combat effectiveness of mass accelerators is understandably improved. By 2552, mass accelerator cannons are capable of the same ammo modifications that handheld mass accelerators are capable of by 2183 (I have not seen anything to lead me to believe they are not capable of such modifications by 2183, I'm just assuming they aren't).

If you read the codex, then you know that all Alliance personal receive genetic modifications, but gene mods are relatively new during the events of Mass Effect, and no one has grown into them yet. That's part of BioWare's excuse for why 2183 humans are almost no different from 2014 humans. By 2552, the Alliance humans have overcome their development-restricting geas placed upon them by those who shall remain unnamed at this time (my excuse for why they're not so advanced when compared to where real-world humans expect to be by 2183), and have advanced their civilization to more believable levels.

Alliance shields are traditional energy shields by 2552. Kinetic barriers are archaic.

Medi-gel is understandably more powerful by 2552, as is omni-gel. You'll see what I mean.

I was intentionally ambiguous with the descriptions of the marine and the trooper. I actually do not intend to describe them at all. They are a conduit with YOUR imagination flowing through them.

Our Newest Heroes

****LOCATION: MILKY WAY / EPSILON ERIDANI SYSTEM / REACH****

****DATE (ALLIANCE / UNSC CALLENDER): 23-7-2552 CE****

****NOTABLE EVENT(S): COVENANT INVASION OF REACH / SIEGE OF NEW ALEXANDRIA****

366 years after the Reaper War...

After 27 years, the Human-Covenant War was finally coming to a close as the Covenant invaded Reach, the last remaining UNSC stronghold before Earth. The Covenant could sense victory was near, and were throwing in everything they had to bring the decades-long interstellar war to a close. An _SDV_-class heavy corvette hung ominously over the city of New Alexandria on Reach, providing support to the Covenant forces in the city below.

After his entire squad was decimated by a single Elite, a lone

surviving UNSC Army trooper linked up with the survivors of several other units who had suffered the same fate, including 18 other troopers, 12 police officers, and a team of four ODSs. The trooper had been drafted immediately after graduating from high school six months ago, and was assigned to defend his people from the Covenant to his dying breath. He was not the kind of person one would expect to join the military, and he wouldn't have, if Humanity wasn't about to be erased from existence, but he was committed to the cause with every fiber in his body. Him and the other survivors held themselves up in a parking garage, with a barricade of vehicles and roadblock barriers forming a perimeter around the top of the entrance ramp. The trooper sat behind a barrier at the far right end, allowing him to lean around the corner and fire down the street on the advancing Covenant forces. He had heard the ODSs say something about unidentified ships showing up in the system and destroying the Covenant supercarrier a few minutes before what seemed like hundreds of enemies started assaulting their position. He didn't believe them. It sounded like motivational bullshit, false hope meant to boost morale. What he saw next made him reconsider his disbelief.

The distinctive boom of kinetic bombardment rang in his ears. He instinctively took cover and looked to the Covenant corvette looming over New Alexandria. The corvette was firing away at the UNSC ground forces in the city, which was why he assumed it was the source of the noise, but it most certainly was not. Four sparkling blue shots rained down from the sky, burrowing themselves in the corvette. They were too fast and too loud to be plasma, but they didn't look like any projectiles the trooper had ever seen before, not with that sparkling blue. They impacted the corvette with seemingly little force, moving it by a barely noticeable margin. The rounds also stopped inside the ship rather than passing through. At first glance, it seemed as if they had little to no effect on the corvette. However, electrical arcs sprouted all over the ship until it exploded three seconds later, the powerful shock wave rippling in the trooper's chest. Flames and debris raced towards the city streets, threatening to claim the lives of all they touched. Before the aftermath could reach the ground, a field of mysterious red and blue energy enveloped the giant flaming mass and sucked it up into space, saving countless lives. The amazing spectacle momentarily distracted the trooper from the Covenant forces firing on his position.

The trooper leaned back out of his cover to take a few more shots at the advancing aliens, hoping to slow them down until someone with a heavy weapon or a grenade could put them down permanently. The moment he leaned out, his cover was struck by a bolt of superheated plasma. The plasma splashed over the surface of the barricade he was leaning around and grazed both his hands and forearms, his right shoulder, and part of his face and chest. His weapon was also melted and fused to his hands.

Screaming, the trooper fell back behind his cover. Body fluids were flash vaporized and exploded around the affected area as he went into shock. He looked down to see both of his arms had fallen off below the elbow. Shortly after, his entire right arm fell off. All around, his fellow defenders fell one by one. His vision became slow and his hearing distorted. The world grew darker and darker until he could see no more.

Just when he thought it was all over, his existence coming to an end, he felt a cool, soothing sensation in his chest, and he

could hear a distorted feminine voice.

"We've got a live one."

The trooper opened his eyes to see what looked like a human in a base red battlesuit with white stripes applying some kind of gel to his wounds. The gel was materializing from a glowing white gauntlet around the beings arm. He tried to get up, but the being gently held him back. Its sinister helmet with a pair of slanted glowing white slits for eyes retracted from his or her face. It was like nothing he had ever seen.

When the helmet retracted, the face of an undeniably human woman was revealed.

"We're not going to hurt you. We're here to help."

She said we. That meant she wasn't alone. He looked around and saw more humans, sixteen in total, who were all bigger than him, wearing similar armor sporting a variety of colors, shapes, and bulkiness. The only thing they all shared was an insignia on the right side of their breastplates, two separated bars that curved inward to form a disconnected triangle with a triangle formation of three stars in the center. One of them was bigger than all the rest, as big as the Spartan-IIs he had heard so many stories about. One time he had seen a group of Spartans here on Reach; seeing them inspired hope. This monster was obviously not trying to instill hope in anyone, with his massive dark armor and his pulsing red lights. He, if he even was a he, also had a different insignia from the rest of the big humans: N7. They all wielded modular weapons with glowing parts that almost reminded him of Covenant weaponry, especially when they began firing red, green, blue, purple, and white.

Plasma bolts crashed into them and were stopped by transparent bubbles that flared upon contact with the ionized gas. One of the big humans raised his hand in the air when his different colored glowing gauntlet appeared over his arm, and a giant semitransparent dome was emitted overhead that halted enemy fire, but not friendly fire. Two of the humans sent bursts of red, blue, and white from their glowing gauntlets. Every so often they would be enveloped in blue clouds and shoot blue spheres of varying shapes from their hands.

All of a sudden the trooper regained feeling in all of his nerves that had been fried. He looked down to see the woman attaching his lost limbs, using the strange gel like glue. He didn't know what that stuff was, but it made biofoam look like shit. She also repaired his armor with a slightly colored different gel, not that his armor did him much good anyway. She put her illuminated hand to his chest and he felt a pinch, like he was just punctured by a hypodermic needle. He suddenly felt better, a lot better.

"Now..."

The woman slapped a device onto him that wrapped around his waist like a belt. One of those bubbles he had seen on the other big humans wrapped around his body. He looked back into the woman's eyes. She reached behind her and revealed a strange rectangular box. He was extremely surprised when it unfolded itself into what the trooper guessed was a submachine gun. She did something to the weapon with her glowing gauntlet, and a red holographic design shone above the

surface. She then pressed it to his chest and he grabbed onto it. It was incredibly light.

"...Get up and fight."

Her helmet extended back over her head, scooping up her flowing hair as she stood and returned fire with what the trooper guessed was an assault rifle.

"You don't have a HUD synced with your shields, so you'll just have to listen closely. When you hear them pop, you get your ass back in cover."

After listening to her last advice, the lone surviving UNSC Army trooper finally stood back up and rejoined the battle. He took aim at an Elite with his new weapon and pulled the trigger. He was slightly surprised to have next to no recoil affecting his aim. The weapon's smart targeting system also negated the effects of the environment on the bullet's flight path, unlike the M118 FMJ-AP rounds fired from a MA37.

Fire was often used as a figure of speech; weapons fire, firing a weapon. It could be used as a noun to refer to ammunition, or as a verb to refer to the act of shooting. When he fired this weapon, actual fire spewed forth and set the Elite aflame, leaving only a pile of ashes.

"Don't worry about ammo or heat. We dealt with that a long time ago."

"_Don't worry about ammo or heat? What kind of gun is this?" _the trooper thought to himself.

To the right, he saw two grunts freeze solid and then explode. To the left, he saw two more shredded to pieces by a sickly green substance that expanded across their bodies upon impact. A jackal came into his sights and was turned into another pile of ash. There was a strange glowing ball that appeared next to a group of three Grunts, a Jackal, and an Elite. An arc of electricity extending from the ball and dropped the elite's shields before exploding and killing the entire group. Another elite came into his sights, another pile of ash. One of the big humans extended an arc of electricity from a glowing gauntlet that chained throughout several enemies, electrocuting them with such high voltage it could be seen discharging from their bodies. Another big human sent a ball of fire from his glowing gauntlet that caused all of the enemies to explode like something out of a nightmare.

Two Hunters entered the fray, and immediately the trooper felt a giant lump of dread form in the pit of his stomach. Before the two monsters could even charge their weapons, two of the big humans became enveloped in those same blue clouds. One sent a sphere that formed what looked like a black hole near the hunters, dangling them helplessly in the air. The other sphere caused a frightening explosion that tore the hunters apart. The trooper's jaw dropped from all of this unbelievable devastation, and for a moment, he forgot he was in the middle of a battle. He just couldn't believe his eyes. It wasn't even a fair fight, for the Covenant. These big humans were tearing them apart in a terrifying fashion.

"Hey! What the hell's wrong with you!? Kill these alien bastards!"

He snapped back to attention, and turned two more grunts into ash. The woman materialized a grenade in her hand and tossed it at a large group of enemies, lifting them helplessly into the air and slamming them back down with bone crushing force. That feeling of dread he received from the hunters was starting to return, only this time he was receiving it from these big humans.

All the big humans began taking cover, and the woman pulled him down too.

"The barrier is about to drop."

Just like the woman said, the dome surrounding their position disappeared under the sustained fire.

"It must be our lucky day. A flock is coming in."

The trooper stared at the woman with a confused look on his face, silently asking for an explanation.

"A flock is a group of friendly drones. They really kick ass in large numbers."

Sitting behind his cover, the trooper was facing the opposite direction of the enemy. In this opposite direction, he saw what looked like simply flying guns with tripods underneath. Some of them were machine guns, others were rocket launchers. They would occasionally land with their tripods, and when they did, they became much more aggressive. This "flock" of drones flanked the enemy from all sides, forcing some of them to scatter their fire away from the big humans, or else be torn to shreds.

Even with the drones, without the barrier, the fight now continued in a matter similar to before these big humans showed up; leaning around cover to try and shoot targets who were also leaning around cover, only this time, when he shot enemies, he could actually take them down himself. He also wasn't immediately downed after being hit just once. It was not long before the enemy started to fall back, and the big humans started advancing. The woman made sure to stay close enough to him so he could hear her speaking, since there was no time to sync their comms.

"Get up. We're advancing."

"_Advancing!? On the Covenant!? Who the hell are these people!?"_

The lone surviving trooper got up without question and advanced along with the big humans. His heart sank even further when he realized the enemy were falling back down the street to be reinforced by a tank that had just turned the corner to annihilate them. Once again, he could barely believe what he was seeing when one of the big humans disappeared in a flash of blue energy, and then reappear right on top of the tank. The big human fired two shots straight through the tank with a high power rifle. The vehicle seized its advance as the big human teleported back to his squadmates.

"_This isn't happening. This just isn't happening. I must be dreaming. This is too good to be true."_

"Enemies on our right."

The trooper moved to a position providing cover from the street on the right along with the big humans. A wave of about thirty big, roaring apes came charging at them guns blazing. He had never seen any aliens before, but he recognized them from the reports as the Jiralhanae; more commonly known among the UNSC as the Brutes. They were approaching faster than they were going down, and the big humans activating giant, glowing red blades fixed under the barrels of their weapons like bayonets. The woman pushed him aside.

"Stay back, and watch your fire. Don't shoot me."

The Brutes' numbers had only been slightly reduced by the time they reached close-quarters range. The monster N7 human stomped his foot into the ground, sending a wave out that knocked down the closing aliens. Once they were down, the other big humans lunged on top of them and dug the bayonets into their skulls, reducing them down to half their numbers. Apparently, the bayonets were extremely hot, as evidenced by all the melted Brute heads.

He counted 12 Brutes left, including one with a hammer, who the trooper assumed was the leader. The remaining Brutes managed to get back to their feet before the big humans were upon them. Four of the big humans "including his savior" stayed back and waited for clear shots, of which there were none. The other 12 big humans engaged the conveniently 12 remaining Brutes in melee combat, with the monster N7 human engaging the leader.

The trooper watched the N7 slap his rifle "which was much bigger and bulkier than the rifles of all the others" onto his back and summon a giant glowing shield over his left arm and a blade over his right. The Brute's hammer smashed into his shield and appeared to break it, if that was the appropriate term for something that looked holographic. Some strange distortion seemed to emanate from the hammer upon impact, twirling the N7 around and bringing his blade across the alien's chest, eliciting a dreadful roar of pain from the beast. The hammer was slapped out of the Brute's hand by the N7, who was still spinning, albeit now of his own accord. With one last turn, the N7 brought a spinning back kick into the Brute's chest with that same wave from earlier crashing solely into this single enemy, rather than spreading out across the ground. It looked as if the Brute was shot by a tank. That was all that could be said to describe such gore.

All the aliens were dead now, and there were no more in sight. The big humans appeared to be talking to one another, but the trooper couldn't hear them because they were communicating through their enclosed helmets. The woman informed him of the situation.

"We're clear for now. All enemies in the area are vacating the city faster than we can chase them down."

Fighters zoomed overhead, and the trooper could hear bombing in the distance.

"Well, faster than us marines can chase them down that is."

The big humans started jogging away, all following the N7.

"We're gonna link up with the rest of our platoon in a warehouse. We'll figure out our next move from there..."

The marine started to jog away, following her squadmates. She quickly stopped when she noticed the trooper wasn't following. She turned to face him. He was staring blankly, unsure of what to do.

"...Are you in, or out."

The trooper didn't really have any other viable options. Everyone in his platoon was dead. They dropped like flies at the hands of the Covenant, and now, he was all that was left, the lone survivor. No other UNSC personnel were responding to his calls. He was cut off, alone. His only two choices were go with these big humans, or stay here and join the rest of his platoon. He should be dead right now, but he wasn't. He was saved; saved by this dangerous and inspiring woman, who was now asking him to follow her to places unknown. He had no other choice but to go with her, but more than that, he wanted to go with her. He wanted to be like these big humans, tearing the Covenant apart, actually doing some damage and making a real difference in the war. UNSC Army troopers were no more than cannon fodder in this war. He knew that. They all knew that. And the trooper didn't want to be just another one down anymore. He wanted to be like these big humans, to save his people, and he had a feeling this woman could show him the way.

"I'm in. Lead the way."

The marine and the trooper both shared a nod. And then, they were off. Their journey together was just getting started.

A/N: I know there wasn't a whole lot of action in this chapter, but that's because it was entirely from the trooper's point of view, and there isn't a whole lot he can do right now. He was pretty much just along for the ride. Combine that with the fact that the Covenant's presence on Reach was still relatively small because their reinforcements were cut off by the Imperium, and the Covenant not having biotic or tech powers to allow them to really stand up to the Alliance, and you've got yourself a lack of action. The next chapter has a fight scene from the Alliance marine's point of view, so I'd like to believe it has a significantly more excitement, since her superior capabilities allow for much more ass kicking than the just point, shoot, and hope you don't go hand to hand with a brute capabilities of the UNSC Army trooper.

I have not started my extensive planning on this story. All I know is I want to focus on the marine and the trooper, and the journey they face together (they may get separated at times during their journey). There may be cameos with 'big characters' like Titans or N7s, but like I said, this story will mainly focus on the ambiguous marine and trooper, the 'little characters' on their 'little journey.'

The weapon the marine lent to the trooper was an M-39 Locust, the newest model in the Locust series (I couldn't state that in this chapter because it was from the trooper's POV, and he didn't know, nor was there any time for the marine to tell him). It has more damage and accuracy, faster travel speed, higher rate of fire, weighs

next to nothing; you name it, it's got it. The marine had to give the trooper a submachine gun because a 2552 Alliance assault rifle would have been too big for him to hold.

4. Only the Beginning

A/N: This chapter, like the last, will definitely be expanded upon when I make it to this part of the story. I think I'll probably have an N7 join the battle and make everyone else look bad. By 2552, the Asari have got nothing on the Alliance Humans in the biotics department, and the N7s really tear shit up.

Only the Beginning

****LOCATION: MILKY WAY / EPSILON ERIDANI SYSTEM / REACH****

****DATE (ALLIANCE / UNSC CALLENDER): 23-7-2552 CE****

****NOTABLE EVENT(S): COVENANT INVASION OF REACH / SIEGE OF NEW ALEXANDRIA****

366 years after the Reaper War...

The big humans moved much faster than the trooper, while still expending less energy, and he struggled to not fall behind. He was determined to stay with them, and pushed himself extra hard to keep up. It was not long before the trooper started dropping his UNSC gear that was ineffective against the Covenant, and doing nothing more than slowing him down. UNSC Army troopers were not issued battlesuits, full-body powered exoskeletons that enhanced a soldier's movements. They wore partial armor covering their vital areas that did nothing more than slow the trooper down in this war. A Type-25 Plasma Rifle could kill a UNSC Army trooper in one or two hits, and they didn't even have to be direct hits. The trooper dropped his chest armor, pistol, and ammo, but kept his grenades and helmet. Even after lightening his load, the trooper still continued to fall behind, and the woman soon picked him and slung him over her shoulders in a fireman's lift.

"Sorry. It was either this, or leave you behind."

The trooper was not happy about being carried around like he could no longer move on his own, but he never would've kept up with the big humans. After the initial shame men in patriarchal societies felt from admitting they needed help wore off, the trooper was left relieved that he did not have to run anymore. Now that they were moving at their own pace, the group quickly made it to their rallying point inside a large warehouse still filled with closed crates and lifting equipment. There was no time to clear everything out before the Covenant arrived. Just as the woman said, there was only a platoon gathered here, or around 64 of the big humans. They had scattered the Covenant forces in the city for now, but would be overrun if the enemy regrouped and located them. The N7 from the squad that saved the trooper appeared to be speaking with another three N7s, but nothing could be heard since they were the only two in the room that didn't retract their helmets. Most of the big humans began departing. The trooper guessed they were going to defend all entrances to the warehouse.

"You want to sync up our comms?" the woman asked.

"Sure. How exactly do we do that?"

"Just stand still."

The woman appeared to be scanning the trooper with her glowing gauntlet.

"What is that?"

When the woman responded, her voice could be heard through the communications device in the trooper's helmet.

"Long story short, it's an omni-tool. Comms working?"

"Yeah."

"Good. There's not a whole lot of us here, only a single division. We're just a rapid-reaction force, but the cavalry's on its way. When you see these guys, don't shoot them..."

The woman projected images of seven aliens with her omni-tool. They were all labeled: Batarian, Geth, Rachni.

"...They're the other members of the Allies, our military alliance. You probably won't see any of these guys, but if you do, walk away, and don't speak of whatever it was you saw..."

The previous images were replaced with a single image of a different alien, labeled Collector.

"...The Collectors aren't part of the Allies, but they're on good terms with the Geth. If you see any of these aliens, avoid them if possible, if not, don't surrender..."

The previous image was replaced with the images of another six different species: Asari, Krogan, Salarian, Turian, Vorcha, Yahg.

"...They're part of the military alliance known as the Council. They're our enemies. The Yahg are largely divided, with a good portion under the control of the Salarians. We've been trying to support the independent faction, to try and prevent the Council from gaining another powerful ally, but we've had to do so covertly to prevent another total galactic war by maintaining deniability, while the Salarians have been lending their full support to their faction. So, you won't see any friendly Yahg, but might see some hostiles."

The trooper seemed off to the marine, like he wasn't all there. He seemed confused, scared, exhausted, and sick all at the same time. He took off his helmet and dropped it like he didn't have the strength to hold it any longer. He was very young, there much was blatantly obvious. The marine guessed he had probably just graduated from high school very recently, and was thrown into war. He may have been drafted, he didn't seem like the soldier type. He seemed to have a fire burning within him, a willing determination to defend his people, but his fire was not very bright, and the marine was worried

he might be on the edge of a breakdown. The marine decided to try and make small talk with the trooper, to maybe get to know him better, and discover the truth about his past. Keeping his mind occupied would also help him hold it together. She retracted her helmet and whipped her hair around a bit before she started talking to really let the trooper know she was another human being, just like him, and not some evil robot or an alien.

"How old are you?"

"I'm 18. Drafted right out of high school. What about you?"

"I'm 248. I also went into active duty right out of high school, to join the fight against the Council."

The trooper was a little shocked when the marine told him she was 248 years old.

"_Humans don't live that long. Do they? Not any humans I've ever heard of," _the trooper thought to himself.

"Did you say you were 248? As in 248 years old?"

"Yeah."

"How long do humans live where you come from?"

That was a bit of a weird question to the marine.

"Uh, we live until we get killed or something."

"You mean you don't die of old age?"

"Oh, no. Of course not. Well, not anymore I guess. We had these... instructions programmed into our minds by an evil race known as the Reapers. These instructions stopped us from achieving our full potential, and sent us down a path of development they desired. After we destroyed every last one of those monsters, we broke the shackles they placed upon us, and then we rose."

The trooper was having a hard time with all of this. Powerful humans who lived forever and kicked Covenant ass; aliens who were apparently friendly with Humanity; and even more aliens who weren't friendly with Humanity. He was actually quite angry. These big humans dropped in out of nowhere and did what his people hadn't been able to do in 27 years: beat back the Covenant. Why hadn't they showed up earlier, before over 30 billion humans had been brutally slaughtered? Why didn't they help his people? Why didn't they do something, anything?

"Who the hell are you people, and where have you been for the past 27 years?"

His words came out slightly more angered than he had intended, something that did not go unnoticed by the woman, but she understood his frustration and responded calmly, having been briefed on the history of the Human-Covenant War.

"We are the proud men and women of Prime Company, warriors of the SSV_ Darkest Before Dawn_, from the Systems Alliance 943rd Marine

Division. I'm part of Prime 2-1. Those four big scary guys over there are N7 marines. They're actually really nice. Just don't fuck with them. Working together, they could probably take on the entire company and come out on top. And I'm assuming that by, 'where have you been for the past 27 years,' you mean why didn't we come to your aid 27 years ago when the Human-Covenant War first started. While I can't speak for Alliance Intelligence, I didn't even know about you, the Covenant, or this whole war until today."

The trooper kind of felt like an ass now for raising his voice higher than he had intended.

"Oh. I see... I'm sorry I sounded angry."

"Don't be. You have every right to be angry. Just don't be angry at me."

"I can't be angry at you. You saved my life, and Reach."

The marine smiled a bit.

"Hey, it's the least I cou-"

The marine silenced herself when the sounds of battle rang nearby. The voice of a man came over their comms. He sounded slightly distressed, but not terribly so. It was as if something bad was happening, but he wasn't too worried about it.

"_This is Prime 4-3. We are under heavy attack by UNSC forces in the west loading bay. Tank... Good kill... We could use some help over here. They're going to overrun our position."_

"_This is 2-3. En route to assist."_

"_Two-one en route."_

The UNSC Army trooper looked to his savior with a worried look. She was part of Prime 2-1, and she was about to go fight his people. Another marine came up to the trooper and restrained his hands behind his back with omni-cuffs. Silicon-carbide, a compound also known as carborundum, wrapped around the trooper and bound him at the wrists. The omni-cuffs adjusted to the wearer's anatomy, and could not be escaped physically through the wearer's sheer strength or agility. To be released, the wearer either had to either hack them, have someone else break them through physical force, or someone with the correct digital key release them manually.

"Stay here. I'll be back for you," the marine told the trooper as her helmet extended over her head, scooping up her hair along the way.

"Sure."

The trooper sat down with his back to a wall with nothing to do but wait. So much was going through his mind, so much internal conflict. He felt the urge to go and fight with the UNSC, like he was supposed to. He wanted to go with the Systems Alliance, maybe even join them. He wanted the UNSC to win the fight outside, but he didn't want the Alliance to lose either. He knew that in a major engagement, the UNSC didn't take any chances because they couldn't afford to; they

attacked unknowns on sight. Most of all, he wished the UNSC and Alliance were just best friends from the start that teamed up against the Covenant.

Meanwhile, the marine raced towards the loading bay with the rest of 2-1. All Alliance personnel were modified and wore battlesuits into combat since the late 21st Century, and the marine struggled to keep up with her faster squadmates, traversing the building at around 50 mph. They had just passed through a door that lead them into a hall with the 4-3 by their side. All the members of 4-3 were also faster than the marine, but she didn't mind. She would get there just the same.

All of the other marines flew into the loading bay that had been blown wide open by an M808 Main Battle Tank several seconds before their slowest companion. Her squad's AI had already designated a spot for her to take cover through their link. When she reached the same massive opened passageway her squadmates reached seconds earlier, she flew into the air towards the general direction of her cover, firing an incendiary blast from her omni-tool at a UNSC soldier, turning him and two others to ash. She landed over six yards from her cover, rolling forward and closing in two yards closer. She slid the rest of the way with extra propulsion from her biotics, whipped out her M-34 Avenger with one hand, and dropped another UNSC soldier with three unmodified mass-alternating rounds.

A mass accelerator propelled a solid metal slug using precisely-controlled electromagnetic attraction and repulsion. The slug was designed to squash or shatter on impact, increasing the energy it transfers to the target. If this were not the case, it would simply punch a hole right through, doing minimal damage. Whether the slug squashed or shattered depended on the target. If the weapon's smart targeting saw it was being aimed at a smaller object, like a head, it designed the slugs to shatter, causing the head to explode. If it was being aimed at a larger object, such as a torso, it designed the slugs to squash, causing massive hydrostatic shock. Over three centuries ago, mass accelerator was a shortened term for mass-reducing electromagnetic accelerator, but now, it was short for mass-alternating electromagnetic accelerator. In the past, a mass effect field would lighten a bullet while it was inside the weapon, allowing it to be propelled to much higher velocities than ever thought possible, but the mass effect field around the bullet dissipated after leaving the weapon. Now, after the bullet was discharged from the weapon, the mass effect field stayed with it as an envelope, keeping it lightened throughout its journey. Upon impact, the bullet's mass was increased by the mass effect field. The result was devastating, and without the proper protection, a single shot to the arm with a pistol could incapacitate a krogan.

No personal shields deterred the marine's fire, but the NxRA worn by UNSC Army troopers did protect her target from the first shot. After the 20th Century armor originally only found on vehicles was destroyed, the second round from the mass-alternating electromagnetic accelerator entered the target's chest. Without the medical systems possessed by Alliance soldiers, the unholy hydrostatic shock delivered by the now mass-increased bullet turned the UNSC soldier's abdominal cavity into mush and caused massive brain haemorrhaging. The third shot burst the target's orifices wide open, turning insides into outsides. A fourth shot would have imploded the UNSC soldier, but the Alliance marine slid all the way to her cover before she

could send another round. Once in cover, she activated her omni-tool and modified her Avenger's ammunition into tungsten rounds, forming her bullets in a manner that was unaffected by any UNSC armor. She leaned out of cover to mow down two more targets identified on her mini-map by her squad's AI, the new ammo doing its horrifying job, allowing three rounds to cause the implosion of her targets instead of four. In the old days, a mass accelerator's ammunition had to be modified before a mission by removing the block of metal inside the weapon and applying the desired modification. Then, modifications could be applied at the flick of the wrist with an omni-tool, but the modifications were more mundane. Modern mass accelerators had the best of both worlds.

A flurry of M118 rounds crashed into the marine from outside her current field of view with little force, leaving her posture unaffected and her shields undamaged. She was built to withstand fire greater than a UNSC SRS99 could ever hope to deliver. It took no less than a full magazine from a UNSC MA37 to drop personal shields, which was why a single Elite could devastate an entire squad of UNSC marines. While simultaneously dropping back to cover out of habit after being hit, the marine sent a neural shock into one of the enemies firing on her. The M118 rounds may not have had enough damage output to hurt the marine, but her instincts still forced her into cover. She could see through her link that one of her squadmates had initiated a tech burst with her neural shock using an incineration blast, turning nine UNSC soldiers into ash.

The squad AI alerted the marine to an incoming grenade, and she repelled it back with her biotics while it was still in the air. Then, to send her enemies a non-verbal 'fuck you,' the marine fabricated a Mark 15 neutron grenade with its fins extended, and tossed it forward from the safety of her cover like a discus in the direction indicated by her squad's AI. The smart grenade glided around her cover and towards her enemies, adhering itself to some heavy loading equipment four UNSC soldiers were taking cover behind. At the command the squad AI, the grenade directed a massive surge of radiation straight through the equipment, the high dosage killing all of the unshielded UNSC soldiers. The Mark 15 grenade was just a 'smarter' version of the Mark 14 grenade. With the Mark 15, an AI or VI can guide the grenade as it glides through the air by manipulating its fins. The Mark 14 already made all the grenades wielded by the Covenant and UNSC look like shit, and the Mark 15 just added insult to injury. All grenades in the Systems Alliance were Mark 15 grenades. Mark 15 grenades are all-purpose, meaning they could be modified to have any desired effect. Whether you wanted a frag, inferno, or flashbang, or something a little more exotic like a miniature neutron bomb, the Mark 15 could do it all.

A few UNSC vehicles periodically stopped in front of the loading bay to try and provide support, but they were all quickly destroyed by the M-560A2 Hydras of the Alliance defenders. The M-560A2 Hydra was the second variant of the M-560 Hydra. The original Hydra released a barrage of miniature missiles, each guided by an independent homing system that seeks out exposed enemies. On impact, three shaped-charges per missile exploded in sequence. The first overloaded the target's shields before the second destroyed its armor, clearing a path for the third warhead to detonate inside the target. With the A1 variant, on impact, four shaped-charges per missile exploded in sequence instead of three. With the A2 variant, on impact, six shaped-charges per missile exploded in sequence, two at a time. Like

much of their outdated equipment, the Systems Alliance and Batarian State covertly sold the old Hydras to Terminus factions. Then, after some time passed, they came back and raided the Terminus factions for possessing military-grade weapons. First, they made a profit by selling the weapons, and then made another profit by confiscating anything they wanted during the subsequent policing actions.

One UNSC soldier fired at the marine with an M41 rocket launcher. The chemical reaction launcher sent the single shaped-charge missile flying toward the marine at insanely slow speeds in comparison to the fusion reaction launchers of the Alliance, which reached their targets nearly instantaneously at this range. The marine saw the rocket coming a mile away, and slapped it aside with her biotics in an instant, sending it off course toward another group of enemies.

The marine stood up to take another designated shot. The two soldiers she was ordered to take down were all the way out of cover, laying down as many rounds as they could. Since the late 21st Century, all Alliance soldiers had their parietal lobes replaced with synaptic processors, and the marine easily sidestepped the incoming M118 rounds, which appeared to be coming at her in slow motion, their chemical propulsion not producing nearly as much speed as electromagnetic acceleration, let alone mass-alternating electromagnetic acceleration. She shot both of the UNSC soldiers in the head. Her weapon's smart targeting recognized what she was aiming at, and its internal computer designed the discharged slugs to shatter, blowing up the two targets' heads. The marine was then ordered to teleport to another position with her biotics and attack a line of enemies with biotic reave, sucking the life out of them and transferring to her a massive boost of energy. She charged forward with her biotics at another line of enemies, killing all in her path. Upon arriving at the other side of the room, she turned and jumped into the air, bringing her fist down in the center of a group of enemies with biotic nova, blasting them into oblivion. She then teleported back to designated cover while many of her companions mimicked her actions, devastating the UNSC forces.

The marine tossed her Avenger over her shoulder, her battlesuit's magnetic field catching it in midair and sticking it to her back as it folded itself up when its internal computer realized it was being holstered. She then teleported into the center of a large group of enemies designated by her squad's AI while several other of her companions did the same, sending the enemy into disarray. The UNSC forces were not trained for such a fight, and were quickly being overwhelmed by the higher capabilities of the more advanced Alliance forces.

Once among the group of enemies, the marine flash-forged dual omni-blades with her omni-tool's mini-fabricator. The marine spun around and cleaved two UNSC soldiers in half with the searing-hot carborundum blades before the others realized they were all about to be sliced, diced, crushed, and smashed. She was no N7 melee monster, but she had two centuries on every one of the poor bastards before her, and was more than capable of brutalizing them all. They tried to resist. They failed.

There was no resistance, no friction as the marine's blades passed through the bodies of her enemies like air. She severed two heads just below the eyes, and another three right down the middle. She

sliced open three chests and dismembered six limbs. Another two enemies lay dead with their bodies in two, separated at the waistline. Three were lifted into the air and brought down head first, splitting their skulls wide open. Two had their faces smashed together with incredible force, merging them in a bloody mess. Two were blown away with biotic blasts, and two more were completely destroyed with biotic strikes, their bodies exploding like grenades. One last poor bastard was not cut, but ripped in half. Before the marine teleported back to her cover, she was attacked from behind by a UNSC soldier who was somehow undetected by the squad AI. He struck her just above the waist with the butt of his rifle. Even if the force of the blow had made it through both layers of her battlesuit, battle-armor and bodysuit, she still would have been completely unaffected by the pathetic strike. All Alliance soldiers had skeletal lattices. By reinforcing the skeleton with a synthetic weave, bones could be made almost unbreakable, but not entirely so. In the event of something actually causing bone trauma, such as being shot by a mass-alternating bullet, medi-gel conduits allowed for bone regeneration in a matter of days. The marine turned around and punched the UNSC soldier in the face, killing him instantly. All Alliance soldiers had muscular microfiber weaves. Perforating the muscles with micro-fibers increased overall strength and decreased the potential for muscle damage from exertion.

A group of five UNSC soldiers, who were all as big as Alliance soldiers and wearing battlesuits entered the fight, taking cover and laying down fire. They were identified by the squad AI as four Spartan-IIIs and one Spartan-II, and were immediately designated primary targets. After one of her squadmates caught them with biotic singularity, the marine was ordered to attack with biotic warp a split-second later, killing the entire group of Spartans with a biotic explosion.

Both the Covenant and UNSC were completely unprepared to deal with the biotic and tech powers of the Alliance, which had become part of basic training after MarsGene developed the biotic induction process during the Batarian Insurrection. For a long time, enhancing existing abilities was permitted under interstellar law, but adding new abilities was not. This law was set in place by the Asari, to ensure no one could match their advantage of having natural biotic ability. After the collapse of major human governments during the Reaper War, and the subsequent reformation of the Systems Alliance, such laws were considered heinous by the Humans, who just had their asses handed to them, and wanted every possible edge they could get to prepare themselves for whoever they inevitably went to war with next.

The marine was dropping back behind cover when she was alerted that a one-way barrier was about to be set up. A semitransparent curtain was emitted between the two forces, and that was when things really went to shit for the UNSC. In unison, all of the 48 Alliance defenders stood up and unleashed their full, undeterred power upon their attackers. The fight ended three seconds later, with all UNSC forces eliminated. It was a horrific scene. Hundreds of UNSC soldiers lay dead in the wide-open loading bay, their bodies all in different states of obliteration. Some were imploded, others turned to ash. Some were eaten alive, others ripped apart. Some were melted, others shattered. Even the toughest individuals always emptied their stomachs upon their first sighting of the aftermath Alliance marines left in their wake.

One Alliance marine had his primary shields dropped by a UNSC M9 grenade, and then had his secondary shields dropped immediately after by another grenade, and then his emergency shields were dropped by one final grenade. With his shields completely down, he then took an M118 round to the lightly armored spot under his arm, but he was just fine. The bullet was able to just barely penetrate his bodysuit, but could not make it through his flesh. All Alliance soldiers had epidermal lattice shunting. Strong synthetic fibers woven through the skin dramatically reduced damage taken from most attacks. The fibers also acted as a medi-gel conduit, improving healing. The "squish skin" of his battlesuit's first-aid interface repaired the small hole in his bodysuit with some omni-gel immediately after expelling the 20th Century bullet.

"_All hostiles terminated."_

The transmission rang in the ears of all those tapped into the comms of Prime Company, including the ears of that lone surviving UNSC Army trooper. A lump formed in his throat and a knot twisted his stomach. When the marine returned and removed his cuffs, the trooper had a hard time looking her in the eye, especially after she retracted her helmet. The marine sat down next to the trooper with her back against the same wall. A deafening awkward silence settled over the pair for a few minutes before the marine decided to try and break it.

"How you holding up?"

"I'm okay. I guess. I'm really hungry."

"Not for long. Here, try this."

The marine handed the trooper a ball of gelatin bigger than both his fists that she forged with her omni-tool's mini-fabricator. The sight was

"What the hell is this thing? And where did you get it from? It just like, materialized in your hand."

"Yeah, omni-tools do stuff like that. Don't ask. Just give it a try. Be adventurous."

The marine managed to lighten the mood a bit and elicit a smile from the trooper. Reluctantly, he took a bite out of the ball. It was probably the greatest thing he'd ever tasted in his entire life. Upon consuming the entirety of the delicious substance, he felt as if he could take on the whole Covenant by himself.

"Whoa," was all the trooper could say.

"Yeah. That's stuff's the shit, huh?"

"Yeah, it's awesome."

"Want another one?"

"You have more?"

"Oh yeah. Hand me those shitty grenades you have."

"What?"

"Trust me. Just, give me one."

"All right."

The trooper handed the marine one of his M9 frag grenades. The grenade was broken down, reformed, and sucked into her omni-tool's omni-gel supply. She then used that same omni-gel to build another ball of the gelatin smart food. It was a powerful regenerative formula that also analyzed and adapted to the consumer's tastes. A few centuries ago, it could be dangerous to eat more than one, but now they were the healthiest food in the galaxy, and could be eaten all day. The marine handed the trooper the gelatin and then formed one for herself.

"Cheers."

The marine raised her gelatin.

"Cheers."

The trooper raised his gelatin and tapped the marine's. The gelatin also adapted to the consumer's eating style, and the trooper ate his like a solid object, taking bites, while the marine ate hers like a cream or sauce, slurping it.

"How much do you know about us? The UNSC and Covenant, I mean."

"Only that you're at war, and I'm to engage the Covenant on sight. Self-defense against UNSC aggression is obviously not prohibited, but we are not to initiate any hostilities. As for why we're here, I don't know. I really doubt the Alliance just wants to help the UNSC out of goodwill. My superiors probably have some agenda I don't know about. But then again, who doesn't? I'm sure they just want to make sure neither you nor the Covenant become a threat."

"Why would we become a threat? We're human like you."

"Human? Yes. Like us? Not necessarily. The UNSC is a separate entity from the Systems Alliance. We could easily go to war in a heartbeat, provided there is a spark, a cause for war. I don't know much about your people. I don't know anything really. But I know how hard interstellar friends are made, and how easily they can become enemies. Nobody wants that, but if it can't be avoided, the Alliance obviously will want to have a head start. I doubt the Alliance is worried about your people. No offense, but we could kick your asses no problem. You guys use some really outdated tech."

"Really."

"Yeah. What's with all the 20th Century shit? Do you guys have some kind of weird restrictions like we did?"

Unbeknownst to both the trooper and marine, the UNSC Humans had been extremely restricted with geas programmed into them by the Forerunners after their ancient ancestors were defeated in the last of the human-forerunner wars over 100,000 years ago. Without outside

influence, the UNSC could not advance its military technology past the 20th Century. They could only expand upon existing technologies. Examples of this were the Magnetic Accelerator Cannon and M6 Spartan Laser, weapons technologies first developed in the late 20th Century, and refined by the United States Military.

"I don't know."

"Yeah, me neither. And it's the Covenant we're worried about. No one wants them to even think about teaming up with the Council, lest they risk starting another total galactic war. Hundreds of billions of people dead; tens of thousands of worlds gone, destroyed completely or left cold and barren. And, when it's all over, everyone's either extinct or close to it."

The conversation was starting to take a depressing turn, and this time it was the trooper who tried to lighten the mood.

"So, when's this cavalry of yours going to show up?"

"Tomorrow."

"Looking forward to it. I'm sure it'll be quite the show."

"Oh, you bet your ass it will be. The Covenant's going to shit their pants, or whatever kind of alien bull crap they use to cover themselves. Just don't get your hopes up."

"Why not?"

"Someone always gets screwed during first contact between warrior-races. I mean, the Turians didn't even try to say hi to us. They just opened fire. That's how it's going with us and the Covenant. Just hope for the best. What else can you do?"

"Yeah. I guess. "

"Yeah. And now we wait."

A/N: In Canon, Noble One, Two, Four, Five, and Six are killed by Covenant forces. Obviously, the Covenant presence on Reach has been largely suppressed, so they instead were killed by Alliance forces when they were ordered to attack the warehouse.

It should be noted that while the fins of a Mark 14 can be extended in canon "allowing the grenade to be thrown like a Frisbee" they cannot be extended in any of the games.

By 2552, the following species are extinct:

Drell

Elcor

Hanar

Quarian

Raloi

Vit'Al_Ã© (called Virtual Aliens in canon)_

Volus

I will not be continuing this story for a while, not until I complete _100,000 Years Later_. I just wanted to put it out there. I have a busy life, but I promise I'll finish what I started.

End
file.